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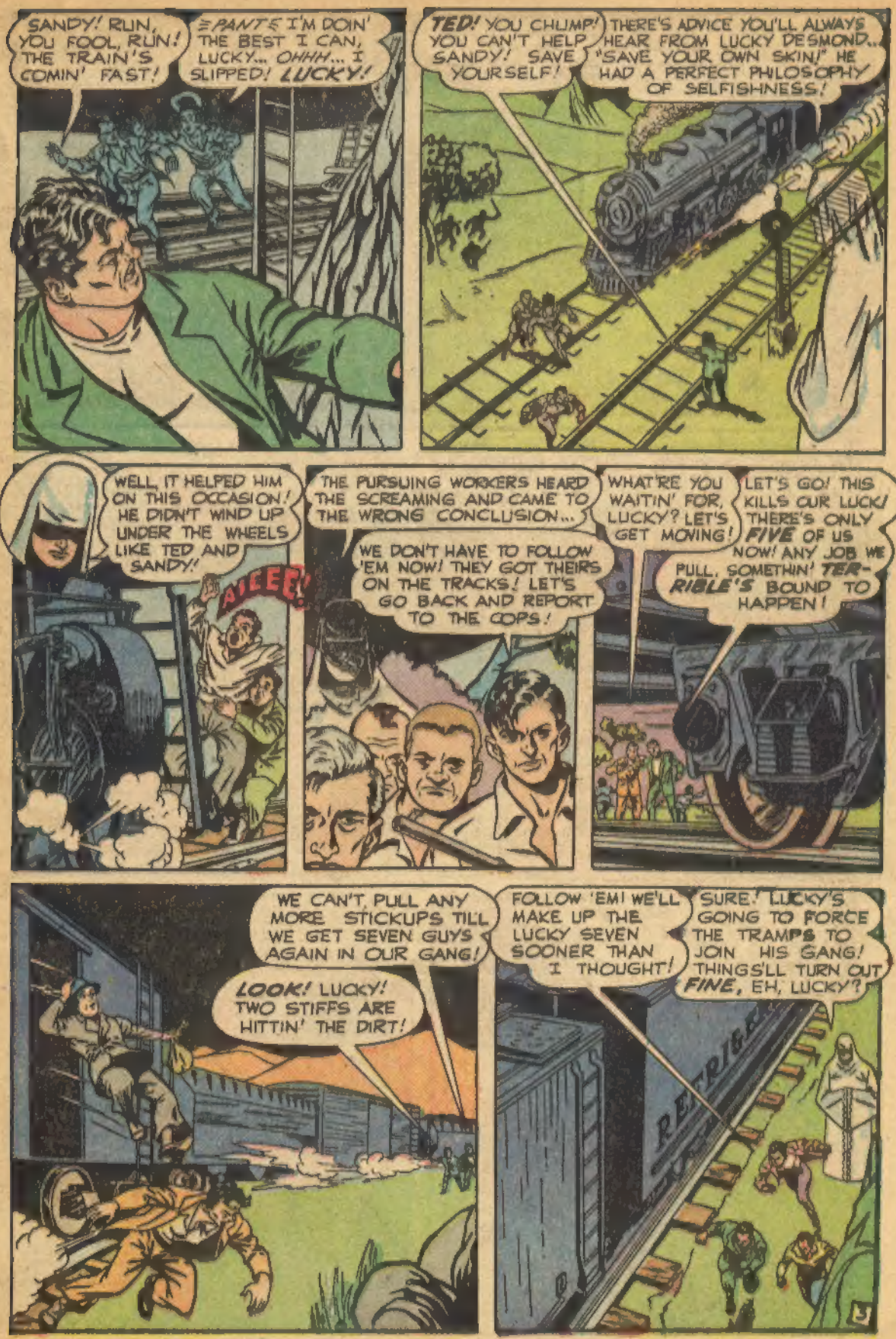
The UNKNOWN
NO MATTER HOW LOW SOME MEN MAY SINK, THEY STILL HAVE A CONSCIENCE. THEY'RE HUMAN TO BEGIN WITH! BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DERELICT WITH A SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG COMES INTO CONFLICT WITH A BEAST WHO KNOWS NOTHING BUT EVIL... WHO WILL STOP AT NOTHING... NOT EVEN MURDER... TO GET WHAT HE WANTS? IN THIS STORY THE UNKNOWN GIVES YOU THE ANSWER!
DON'T SHOOT! HAVEN'T YOU DONE ENOUGH HARM?
GET OUT OF THE WAY, YOU FOOL! IT'S HIM OR US!
"LUCKY" DESMOND IS THE LEADER OF A GANG OF UNSCRUPULOUS HOBOES WHO PREY ON HARVEST WORKERS!
BUT, LUCKY... WHAT IF THE GUYS AT THE RED RIVER ORCHARD GOT GUNS?
WE GOT GUNS, TOO! BESIDES, WE CAN GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING AS LONG AS WE KEEP ON PLAYING GOOD OLD NUMBER SEVEN! COME ON, SEVEN!
SEE? IT'S SEVEN! THEM RED RIVER HARVEST WORKERS AIN'T GOT A CHANCE!

THAT NIGHT...
EVERYBODY'S ASLEEP, LUCKY!
OKAY, GUYS! UP AN' AT 'EM!
ON YOUR FEET, YOU CLUCKS! KEEP THEM HANDS HIGH OR WE'LL MASSACRE THE LOT OF YOU!
IT'S LUCKY DESMOND! HE RAIDED A WHEAT HARVESTIN' CREW I WAS WITH LAST AUGUST!
RIGHT! DON'T TRY ANY FUNNY BUSINESS OR YOU'LL GET WHAT THEY GOT!
I GOT THE DOUGH, LUCKY! LET'S BEAT IT!
YOU CHUMPS STAND STILL! THE GUY THAT'S DUMB ENOUGH TO FOLLOW US WILL GET HARVESTED HIMSELF BY THE GRIM REAPER!
MOMENTS LATER...
THIS TIME THAT CUTTHROAT AIN'T GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER! THERE ARE RIFLES IN THE TOOL SHED! THE RANCH USES THEM TO SCARE OFF MOUNTAIN LIONS!
RIGHT! WE CAN USE 'EM TO KILL SKUNK!
THEY'RE CHASIN' US, LUCKY!
THERE'S A FREIGHT COMIN' AROUND THE BEND! GET TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRESTLE! THE TRAIN'LL CUT OFF THE WORKERS AN' THEY'LL THINK WE JUMPED IT! COME ON!
TOOT! TOOT!
2


SANDY! RUN, YOU FOOL, RUN! THE TRAIN'S COMIN' FAST!
≡PANT≡ I'M DOIN' THE BEST I CAN, LUCKY... OHHH... I SLIPPED! LUCKY!
TED! YOU CHUMP! YOU CAN'T HELP SANDY! SAVE YOURSELF!
THERE'S ADVICE YOU'LL ALWAYS HEAR FROM LUCKY DESMOND.. "SAVE YOUR OWN SKIN!" HE HAD A PERFECT PHILOSOPHY OF SELFISHNESS!
WELL, IT HELPED HIM ON THIS OCCASION! HE DIDN'T WIND UP UNDER THE WHEELS LIKE TED AND SANDY!
AIEEE!
THE PURSUING WORKERS HEARD THE SCREAMING AND CAME TO THE WRONG CONCLUSION...
WE DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW 'EM NOW! THEY GOT THEIRS ON THE TRACKS! LET'S GO BACK AND REPORT TO THE COPS!
WHAT'RE YOU WAITIN' FOR, LUCKY? LET'S GET MOVING!
LET'S GO! THIS KILLS OUR LUCK! THERE'S ONLY FIVE OF US NOW! ANY JOB WE PULL, SOMETHIN' TERRIBLE'S BOUND TO HAPPEN!
WE CAN'T PULL ANY MORE STICKUPS TILL WE GET SEVEN GUYS AGAIN IN OUR GANG!
LOOK! LUCKY! TWO STIFFS ARE HITTIN' THE DIRT!
FOLLOW 'EM! WE'LL MAKE UP THE LUCKY SEVEN SOONER THAN I THOUGHT!
SURE! LUCKY'S GOING TO FORCE THE TRAMPS TO JOIN HIS GANG! THINGS'LL TURN OUT FINE, EH, LUCKY?
REFRIG

≡GASP≡ W-WAIT, BARON! L-LEMME GET MY BREATH BACK! ≡GASP≡

YOU NEED FOOD IN YOUR BELLY, HALF-PINT! I'LL WARM UP SOME BEANS!

I DON'T WANT BEANS! I'M DYIN' OF *THIRST!* I NEED A DRINK OR I'LL *DIE!* I CAN'T STAND IT ANY MORE!

BEANS

BUT LIQUOR'S POISON FOR YOU, HALF-PINT! IT'LL *KILL* YOU!

I KNOW THAT GUY, LUCKY! HE'S NAMED HALF-PINT!

THEY CALL THE OTHER GUY THE BARON! HE ONCE WAS A MILLIONAIRE!

GET ME A BOTTLE, BARON! *ANY* KIND OF A BOTTLE! Y-YOU'VE *GOTTA!* ≡SOB≡ I'M GOIN' *CRAZY!*

TAKE A GOOD SWIG OF THIS WHISKEY--HERE, PAL--DRINK UP!

GASP!

LOOK AT THE STEW-BUM! *HA-HA!* HEY, HALF-PINT... HOW'D YOU LIKE A QUART OF POISONED HOOTCH A DAY?

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, HALF-PINT!

LOOK, BIG MOUTH, YOUR PAL WANTS ROTGUT...ROTGUT'S WHAT HE'LL GET! JOIN MY GANG—YOU'LL GET ANY-THING YOU WANT!

I WANT NOTHING EXCEPT TO BE LEFT ALONE!

IT WAS WONDERFUL! C-CAN I REALLY HAVE A QUART A DAY?
SURE, JUST JOIN MY GANG! WELL, BARON... GOIN' TO QUIT YOUR BUDDY OR ARE YOU GONNA LOOK AFTER HIM?
I'LL STAY WITH HIM!
AND FATE WILL JOIN YOU, BARON! YOU'RE ALL IN THE HANDS OF FATE, FOR YOU HAVE A MORAL CONSCIENCE! LUCKY KNOWS NOTHING BUT GREED AND VIOLENCE! FATE IS BOUND TO TAKE OVER NOW!
AYE, BARON! HANG BACK! BLOT OUT THE SIGHT OF EVIL-DOING WHICH YOU TOLERATE FOR A DRUNKARD'S SAKE! YOU'VE SEEN A DOZEN SUCH SIGHTS... BUT DONE NOTHING TO PREVENT THEM!
LISTEN, BARON... YOU AIN'T DONE A THING ALL MONTH BUT PREACH!
IF YOU'RE DISSATISFIED WITH MY SERVICE, FIRE ME!
I'LL BREAK YOUR JAW! YOU'VE BEEN LOOKIN' FOR TROUBLE EVER SINCE YOU JOINED UP!
UGH!
YOU DON'T HELP OUT! YOU DON'T TAKE ANY DOUGH! WHY?
SPILL IT OR I'LL BEAT YOUR BRAINS OUT!
I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH MONEY... I HATE MONEY! I SEE WHAT PEOPLE DO TO GET MONEY! THAT'S WHY I BECAME A HOBO!
5

IT WAS MY SELFISH, CONNIVING, DISHONEST GREED FOR MONEY WHICH CAUSED THE SUICIDE OF MY PARTNER! I'VE SWINDLED DOZENS OF PEOPLE!
HALF-PINT WENT TO JAIL FOR RUNNING OVER TWO KIDS WHILE DRUNK! WHEN HE LEFT PRISON, HE BEGAN TO DRINK HIMSELF TO DEATH. SINCE WE BOTH SUFFERED FROM GUILTY CONSCIENCES WE BUMMED AROUND TOGETHER...
A VERY SAD STORY, BARON! ONLY THERE'LL BE A SADDER ONE IF YOU DON'T START MAKIN' YOURSELF USEFUL! GET ME?
S-SURE... GULPS
IT WAS INEVITABLE, THIS STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE MAN OF CONSCIENCE AND THE MAN OF EVIL... FOR NEITHER CHANGED HIS NATURE. THE HOLDUPS CONTINUED... THE VIOLENCE CONTINUED... AND THE BARON CONTINUED TO STAND APART!
IF I COULD ONLY ESCAPE WITH HALF-PINT...
ONE NIGHT, THE BARON DID ATTEMPT AN ESCAPE, BUT...
BARON, I OUGHTA KILL YOU FOR THIS!
CRACK!
THERE'S JUST ONE THING STOPPIN' ME FROM KILLIN' YOU! I WON'T BUST UP A WINNIN' COMBINATION!
6

I STILL DON'T GET IT, LUCKY, THE BARON AIN'T NO GOOD TO US! WHY DON'T YOU CROAK HIM?
IT'S LIKE DICE! WHEN YOU KEEP THROWIN' SEVENS, YOU DON'T BREAK UP YOUR LUCKY STREAK!
BE PATIENT, BARON! TOMORROW NIGHT YOU WILL SEE WHAT FATE HAS IN STORE FOR YOU... ALL OF YOU!
AND THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...
L-LUCKY... GASP... GIMME A SWIG... I... I'VE GOT... THE SHAKES!
SHUT UP! YOU'LL DRINK LATER... WHEN WE'RE ON THE FREIGHT!
RAISE 'EM, YOU CRUMBS! NATE, COLLECT THE WINNIN'S! THIS IS OUR POT!
LOOK OUT, LUCKY! ONE OF 'EM'S GOT A ROD!
GET GOIN'! THERE'S A FREIGHT PASSIN' THE STATION IN TWENTY MINUTES!
H-HE KILLED ANOTHER MAN! WHEN IS THIS MURDERING GOING TO STOP?
TWENTY MINUTES LATER, AS LUCKY'S MOB BOARDS THE FREIGHT...
HEY, YOU BUMS! GET OFF OR I'LL SHOOT YOU OFF!
A BRAKEMAN!
17

MURDERER! WHEN WILL YOU STOP KILLING? HAVE YOU NO CONSCIENCE?
NO! NOW GET INTO THAT BOXCAR OR YOU'LL GET THE SAME!
BANG!
AMONG THE LAST TO WALK THE PERILOUS TOP OF THE SWAYING CAR WAS POOR TREMBLING HALF-PINT! HERE WAS TRAGEDY IN THE MAKING!
I C-CAN'T KEEP MY BALANCE! ≡GASP≡ I'M F-FALLING!
YEOWWWW!
H-HALF-PINT! H-HE FELL BETWEEN THE CARS! YOU KILLED HIM, LUCKY! YOU PLIED HIM WITH "BELLY-WASH" TILL HE COULDN'T STAND ON HIS FEET!
BAH! THIS BUSTS UP MY LUCKY-SEVEN COMBINATION!
AIEEEEEEEE
REFRIGERATOR CAR
WARNING! TRIP LEVER FOR AUTOMATIC CLOSING AND SEAL-TIGHT REFRIGERATION
YOU CRUMB! GO JOIN YOUR SWILL-GUTTED PAL! I DON'T NEED YOU ANY MORE! MY LUCKY SEVEN STREAK IS ENDED!
BUT AS THE BARON PLUNGED OUT, HIS FOOT PUSHED THE REFRIGERATION LEVER!
CLICK!
LUCKY! WHAT KIND OF CAR IS THIS? IT'S GETTIN' COLD IN HERE!
≡GASP≡ IT'S A REFRIGERATOR CAR WE'RE LOCKED IN! WE'LL FREEZE TO DEATH!
SOB! IT'S NO USE! THE DOOR WON'T OPEN! WE'LL BE FROZEN STIFF BY THE TIME THE TRAIN STOPS! SOB!
AYE, LUCKY! FATE HAS CONDEMNED YOU TO THE SLOW AGONY OF FREEZING TO DEATH...A FATE YOU BROUGHT ON YOURSELF!
AND SO, IN THE END, HALF-PINT'S DRUNKENNESS DESTROYED HIM, LUCKY'S LIFE OF MURDER AND VIOLENCE RESULTED IN VIOLENT DEATH! THE BARON'S PUNISHMENT WAS MENTAL ANGUISH. HE MUST GO ON LIVING... AND REMEMBERING!
The END

BERT AND SUE

SUE! L-LOOK! TEX HAS BEEN SHOT!

BANG!

MR AND MRS. SLEUTH, BETTER KNOWN AS BERT AND SUE, HAD ENCOUNTERED CRIME AND MURDER IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE BUT THE LAST PLACE THEY'D EXPECT TO MEET UP WITH MURDER WAS THE RODEO! HERE, MIDST THE THUNDER OF HOOFS AND BELLOWING OF WILD STEERS, BERT AND SUE PIT THEIR WITS AGAINST A DIABOLICAL KILLER WHO TRIES TO TURN A RODEO INTO A SLAUGHTER-HOUSE!

F. GIACOIA & LANPER

WE DON'T HAVE TO GO TO THE RODEO, SUE! I.. I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN R.DING A BUCKING BRONCO FOR HOURS!

YEAH... SHE RATTLES SOMETH'N' AW-FUL! NEVER KNOW WHEN SHE'LL COME APART!

TAX

BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES LIFE INTERESTIN'! HOLD TIGHT! WE'RE STOPPIN' AND YOU MIGHT GO THROUGH THE WINDOW!

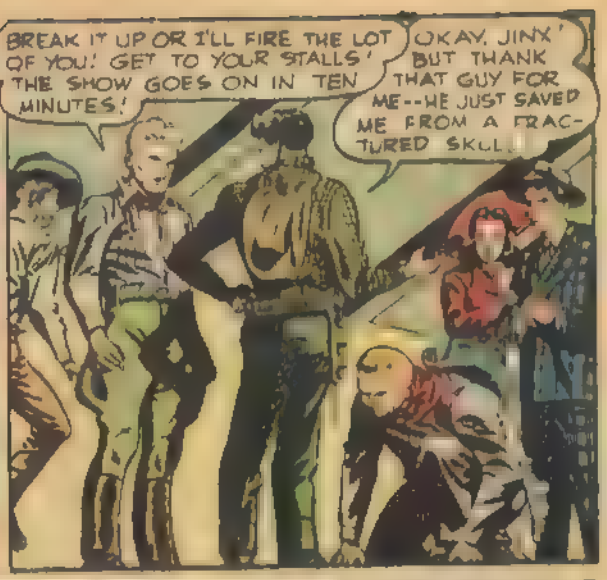
YEOWW!

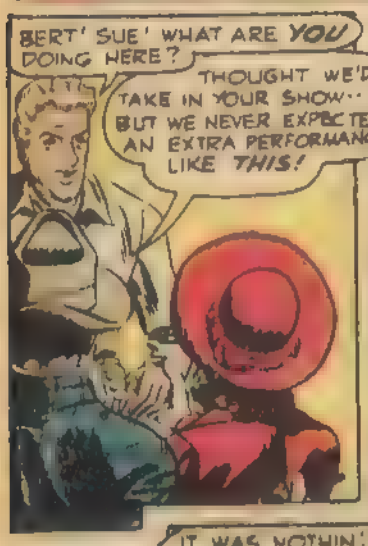
JINX FELTON'S RODEO

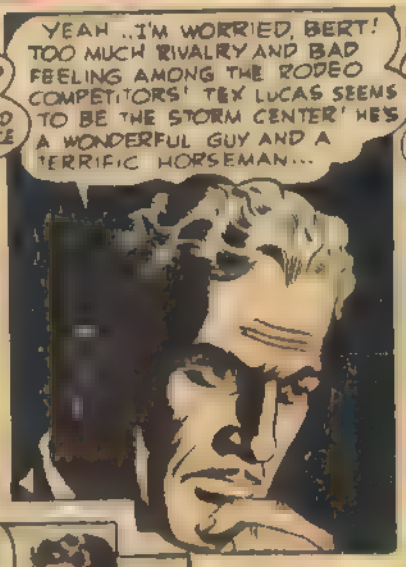
SCREECH!

GASP! G-GIVE THE DRIVER A BIG TIP, DEAR! AFTER ALL HE GOT US HERE ALIVE!
AN' WHAT OTHER TAXI-DRIVER CAN MAKE THAT STATEMENT? NO KIDDIN', PAL? AIN'T A RODEO KINDA SUPERFLUOUS AFTER ENJOYIN' A TRIP IN MY CAB?
HERE'S FIVE BUCKS! BUY YOURSELF ANOTHER LIMOUSINE-- ONE WITH SADDLE AND STIRRUPS!
THANKS PAL! ENJOY THE SHOW! I HEAR THEY GOT A COUPLE OF ACTS THAT'LL KILL YA!
AWWW TWENTY MINUTES BEFORE SHOW TIME-WANT TO GO BACKSTAGE AND SAY HELLO TO JINX FELTON?
GOOD IDEA! WE HAVEN'T SEEN JINX SINCE WE SPENT LAST EASTER AT HIS DUDE RANCH!
WHERE CAN WE FIND JINX FELTON?
SUE! THERE'S A FIGHT GOING ON AROUND THE CORNER!
BANG!
BREAK IT UP, YOU GUYS! WHAT GOES ON, ANYWAY?
DITCH TRIED TO DOCTOR MY HORSE-- AND I CAUGHT HIM!
HE'S BETTIN ON THE CONTEST AN' WANTED TO FIX IT SO HE CAN'T LOSE! WHEN I CAUGHT HIM, HE DREW ON ME!
YA LIAR! HE ALWAYS HAD IT IN FOR ME! HE WANTS ME TO GET INTO TROUBLE!
THE HOSS WON'T GET THE DOCTORIN'-- YOU WILL!
YOU FOOL! PUT DOWN THAT SHOE!

SUDDENLY.
SOCK!

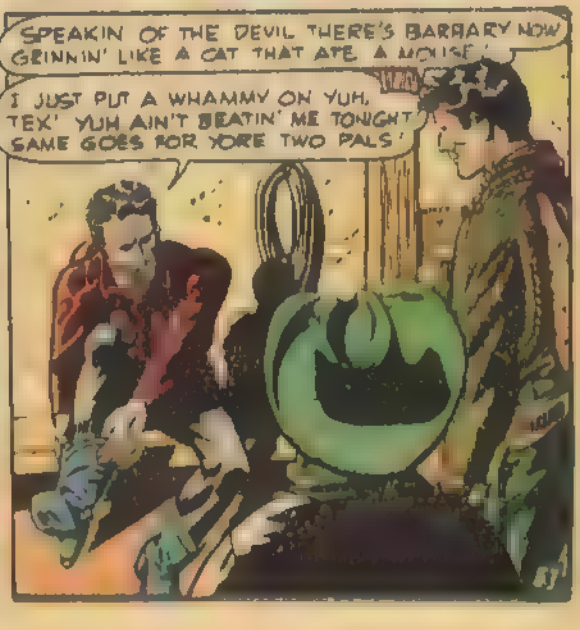

BREAK IT UP OR I'LL FIRE THE LOT OF YOU! GET TO YOUR STALLS! THE SHOW GOES ON IN TEN MINUTES!
OKAY, JINX! BUT THANK THAT GUY FOR ME--HE JUST SAVED ME FROM A FRACTURED SKULL!

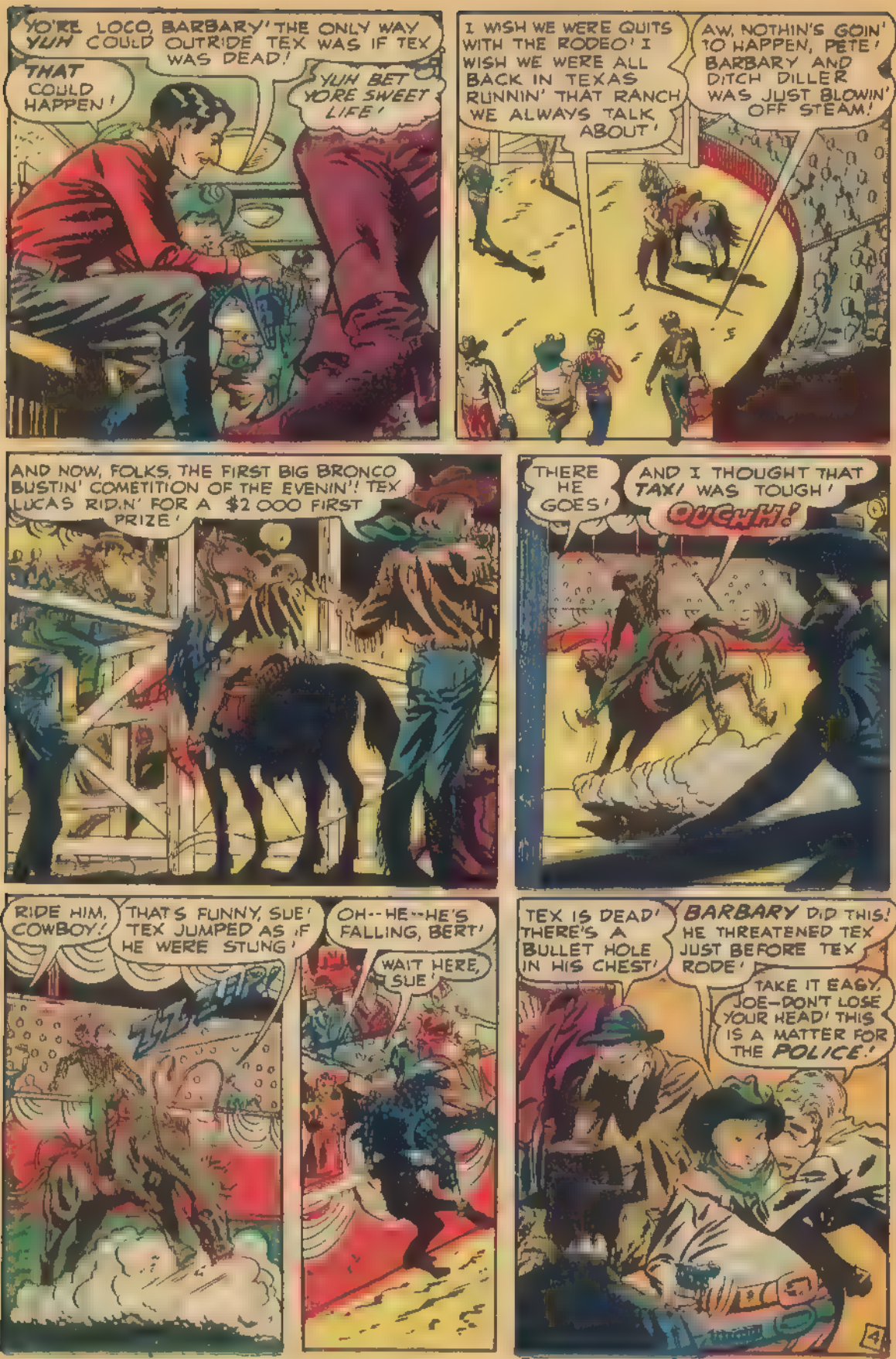

BERT! SUE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THOUGHT WE'D TAKE IN YOUR SHOW.. BUT WE NEVER EXPECTED AN EXTRA PERFORMANCE LIKE THIS!


YEAH..I'M WORRIED, BERT! TOO MUCH RIVALRY AND BAD FEELING AMONG THE RODEO COMPETITORS! TEX LUCAS SEEMS TO BE THE STORM CENTER! HE'S A WONDERFUL GUY AND A TERRIFIC HORSEMAN...

THEY ALL ENVY TEX! LISTEN - TAKE MY SPECIAL BOX SEATS! WATCH TEX PERFORM--I'LL JOIN YOU AS SOON AS I CAN!
THANKS, JINX! IT'S MIGHTY NICE OF YOU!

I HEARD YOU HAD TROUBLE WITH DITCH DILLER, TEX!
IT WAS NOTHIN', JOE! THE GUY I REALLY LOSE SLEEP OVER IS BARBARY! HE'S SO SORE AT MY COPPIN' ALL THE PRIZES, HE MIGHT PULL SOMETHIN' DIRTY TO WIN!


SPEAKIN OF THE DEVIL, THERE'S BARBARY NOW GRINNIN' LIKE A CAT THAT ATE A MOUSE!
I JUST PUT A WHAMMY ON YUH, TEX! YUH AIN'T BEATIN' ME TONIGHT SAME GOES FOR YORE TWO PALS!


YO'RE LOCO, BARBARY! THE ONLY WAY YUH COULD OUTRIDE TEX WAS IF TEX WAS DEAD!
THAT COULD HAPPEN!
YUH BET YORE SWEET LIFE!
I WISH WE WERE QUITS WITH THE RODEO! I WISH WE WERE ALL BACK IN TEXAS RUNNIN' THAT RANCH WE ALWAYS TALK ABOUT!
AW, NOTHIN'S GOIN' TO HAPPEN, PETE! BARBARY AND DITCH DILLER WAS JUST BLOWIN' OFF STEAM!
AND NOW, FOLKS, THE FIRST BIG BRONCO BUSTIN' COMETITION OF THE EVENIN'! TEX LUCAS RIDIN' FOR A $2 000 FIRST PRIZE!
THERE HE GOES!
AND I THOUGHT THAT TAX! WAS TOUGH!
OUCHH!
RIDE HIM, COWBOY!
THAT'S FUNNY, SUE! TEX JUMPED AS IF HE WERE STUNG!
OH--HE--HE'S FALLING, BERT!
WAIT HERE, SUE!
TEX IS DEAD! THERE'S A BULLET HOLE IN HIS CHEST!
BARBARY DID THIS! HE THREATENED TEX JUST BEFORE TEX RODE!
TAKE IT EASY, JOE--DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD! THIS IS A MATTER FOR THE POLICE!
4

AFTER THE CORONER ARRIVES....
HERE'S A MYSTERY, BERT. THE CORONER JUST DUG THIS .22 CALIBRE BULLET OUT OF TEX'S BODY! WHY A .22 WHEN EVERYBODY HERE TOTES A .38 OR A 45?
WHAT DID THE COPS SAY? DO THEY KNOW WHO KILLED TEX?
NOT YET! THEY'RE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY THE KILLER USED A .22 WHEN SO MANY .45s ARE AROUND!
LOOK, MISTER... JINX SAYS YOU'RE AN A NUMBER 1 DETECTIVE! WE WANT THE MURDERIN' POLECAT WHO KILLED TEX TO GET WHAT'S COMIN' TO HIM! WE'LL PAY ANYTHIN'!
HUH! WHEN BERT SMELLS A MYSTERY, YOU'D HAVE TO PAY HIM NOT TO INVESTIGATE!
WE FIGURE EITHER DITCH DILLER OR BARBARY LEMAINE DID IT! THEY HATED TEX THE MOST!
ESPECIALLY BARBARY! HE AIN'T EARNED A NICKEL SINCE TEX'S BEEN RIDIN' AGAINST HIM!
I'LL KEEP 'EM BOTH IN MIND, BOYS!
HERE'S BARBARY NOW! SAY, BARBARY-WANT TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MURDER!
I GOT A JOB TO DO! OUTA MY WAY OR I'LL RUN YUH DOWN!
LOOK OUT, BERT! HE MEANS IT!
SO DO I! I'LL TEACH HIM HE CAN'T RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER EVERYBODY...
...AND I'M GOING TO SEE THAT HE REMEMBERS IT!
CRACK!

I--I WOULDN'T TELL YOU NOTHIN', NOT EVEN IF YUH WAS A COP' H-HEY— WHERE YOU GOIN' WITH MY GUN?
DO YOU THINK I'D GIVE A DOUBLE-CROSSING RAT LIKE YOU A CHANCE TO SHOOT ME IN THE BACK?
JINX, HERE'S BARBARY'S .45 RETURN IT TO HIM WHEN I'VE GONE HOME! HE'S NOT THE KIND OF HOMBRE I LIKE TO TURN MY BACK ON!
BARBARY'S TOUGH, ALL RIGHT! HMM... MURDER'S A NASTY THING TO HAPPEN TO A RODEO-- ESPECIALLY IN MID-SEASON!
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, HONEY?
PRACTICALLY ANYBODY WAS IN A POSITION TO KILL TEX! WHAT PUZZLES ME IS WHY A .22 CALIBRE BULLET? AW, LET'S GO HOME AND GET SOME SLEEP!
TAXI!
THE NEXT MORNING...
BERT, IT'S TEX'S FRIEND, PETE! YOU KNOW THE ONE WITH FOUR FINGERS AND THE PATCH OVER HIS EYE! JOE JUST GOT A THREATENING LETTER!
TELL PETE I'LL BE DOWN IN AN HOUR!
LATER...
IF I WRESTLE A STEER IN TONIGHT'S $1,500 COMPETITION I'M SUPPOSED TO DIE LIKE TEX DID! SHOULD I BACK OUT?
IT'S UP TO YOU, JOE. BUT I'D TELL THE WRITER OF THIS NOTE TO GO TO BLAZES AND IGNORE THE THREAT!
LOOK! NOTHING HAPPENED AN' I WON THE COMPETITION! THAT LETTER MUST'VE COME FROM A CRANK!
I HOPE SO, JOE! YOU GAVE A TERRIFIC EXHIBITION OF BRAVERY!
BUT MINUTES LATER...

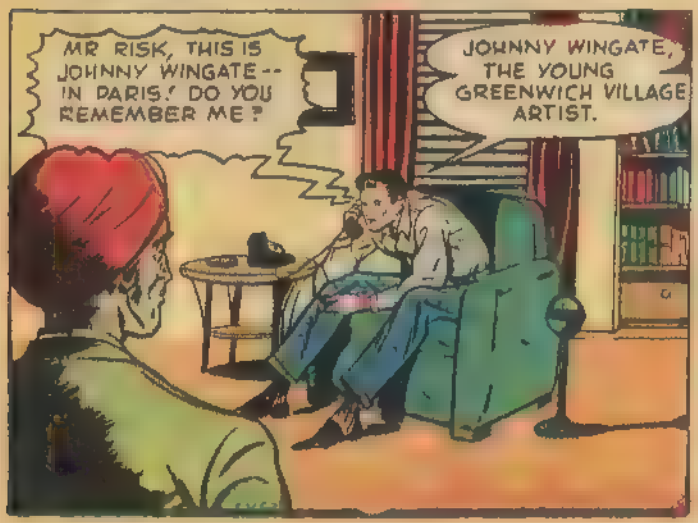
THE WHOLE RODEO'S BEEN BUZZING ABOUT YOUR COURAGE, JOE! WE ALL WANT TO DRINK A TOAST TO YOU! COME ON, JOE!
SHUCKS, I WOULDN'T LET NO MURDERER SCARE ME OUT OF 1500 BUCKS!
IN JINX FELTON'S OFFICE.
I AIN'T DRINKIN' TO THAT FAT PIG! HE WAS A FRIEND OF TEX LUCAS!
THEN WE'LL DRINK WITHOUT BAR-BARY! TO JOE! A GUY WITH A LOT OF GUTS!
CLICK!
SAY—WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?
A MINUTE LATER
G-GOOD HEAVENS! JOE'S BEEN SHOT! THE KILLER'S IN THIS ROOM!
NO FINGERPRINTS ON THE SWITCH! WHOEVER TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS USED GLOVES!
DON'T BE S'ILLY, BERT! I'M WEARING GLOVES AND I DIDN'T KILL JOE!
I'M WEARIN' GLOVES TOO!
ME, TOO! DOES THAT MAKE ME A MURDERER?
HOW ABOUT SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE ROOM TURNIN' OFF THE LIGHTS, KILLIN' JOE AN' VAMOOSIN'?
IT'S POSS-BLE, JINX ESPECIALLY WITH DITCH DILLER CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT!
HMM...NO SMELL OF GUN SMOKE!

YOU'RE CLEAN! NOT EVEN A PEA SHOOTER ON YOU BOYS' OKAY-- STICK AROUND WHILE I FIND DILLER'
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, BERT! I WANT TO TELEGRAPH JOE'S S STER'
I'LL GO WITH YOU, PETE'
WHILE YOU'RE LOOKING UP JOE'S SISTER'S ADDRESS PETE, TELL ME WHY YOUR INDEX FINGER IS LONGER THAN YOUR FORE-FINGER! AND HOW DID YOU ADD A FIFTH FINGER OVERNIGHT?
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED THEM QUESTIONS, MA'AM!
MEANWHILE, IN DITCH DILLER'S DRESSING ROOM...
BUT I DIDN'T KILL JOE! I AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' ON ME BUT A FOUNTAIN PEN'
FOUNTAIN PEN! MIGOSH! T-THAT'S IT! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT BEFORE?
HEY! WHERE YOU GOIN' WITH MY WHIP?
YES, MA'AM! I'VE GOT A FIFTH FINGER NOW... A .22 CALIBRE FINGER! I TAKE THE GLOVE OFF TO FIRE IT! I PUT IT BACK ON WHEN I'M THROUGH! I SENT JOE THAT WARNING NOTE TO THROW BERT OFF MY TRAIL'
I KILLED TEX AN' JOE TO BECOME FULL OWNER OF A PIECE OF TEXAS LAND WE WERE ALL EQUAL PARTNERS OF' I GOT A TELEGRAM LAST WEEK THE BOYS KNEW NOTHIN' ABOUT.
...OIL WAS DISCOVERED ON THAT LAND WE THOUGHT WAS WORTHLESS AN' I'M KEEPIN' ALL OF IT NOW--
KAWW!
ONE FALSE MOVE AND I'LL WRAP THIS WHIP AROUND YOUR NECK PETE' YOU ALL RIGHT, SUE'
SURE GLAD YOU FIGURED OUT THE MURDERER'S METHOD LIKE I DID! RESCUED BY MY GALLANT KNIGHT IN THE NICK OF TIME'
THE END

MR. RISK

RUE LETA
CHANCE
CAFE
IN THE COLORFUL ARTIST QUARTER OF PARIS, MR RISK DISCOVERS A MACABRE TALENT- A TALENT THAT COPS THE PRIZE IN A
ROGUES GALLERY
Sy Grudko

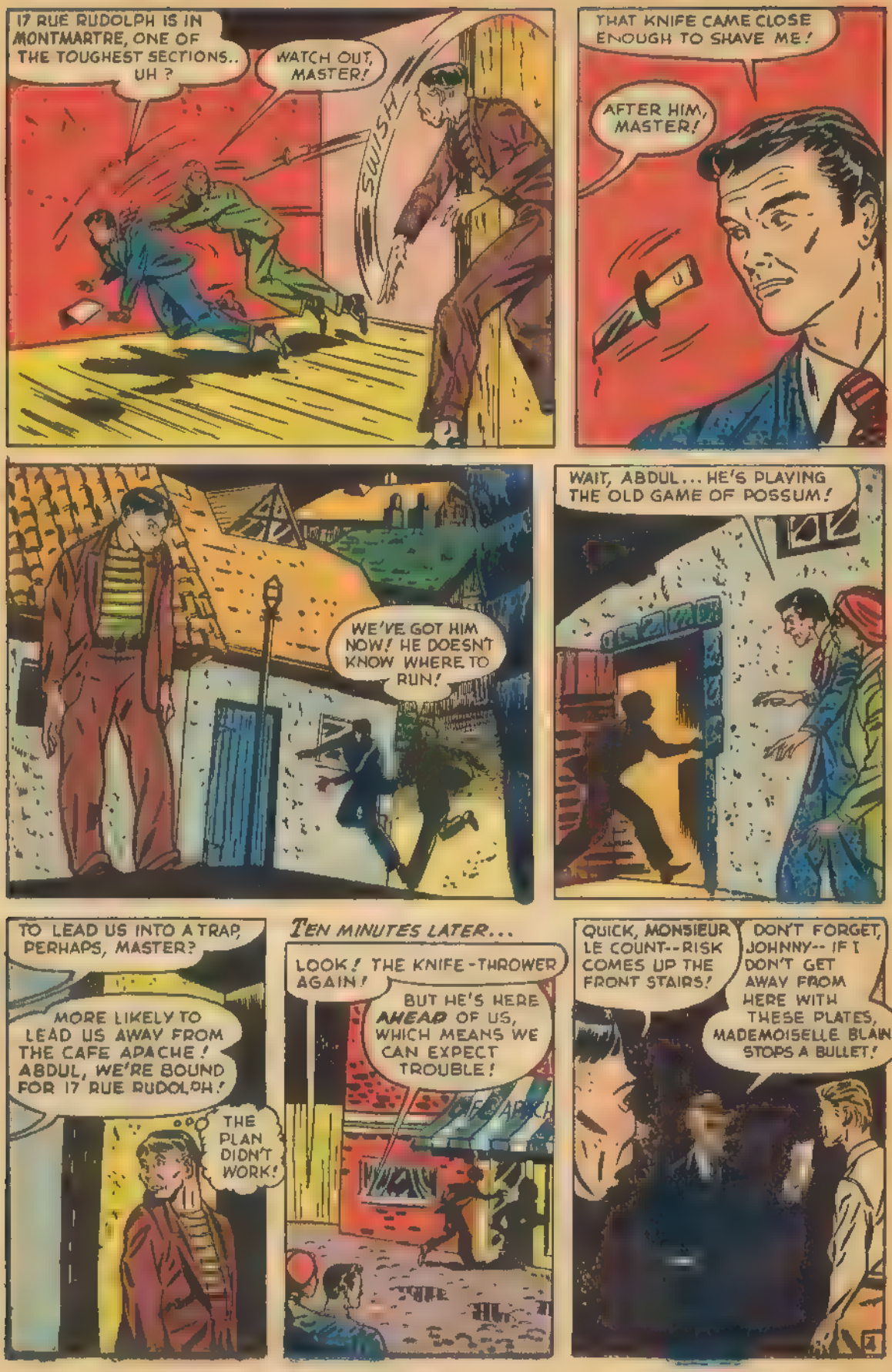
VIA TRANSATLANTIC TELEPHONE FROM PARIS, COMES A VOICE THAT IS UNMISTAKABLY AMERICAN...

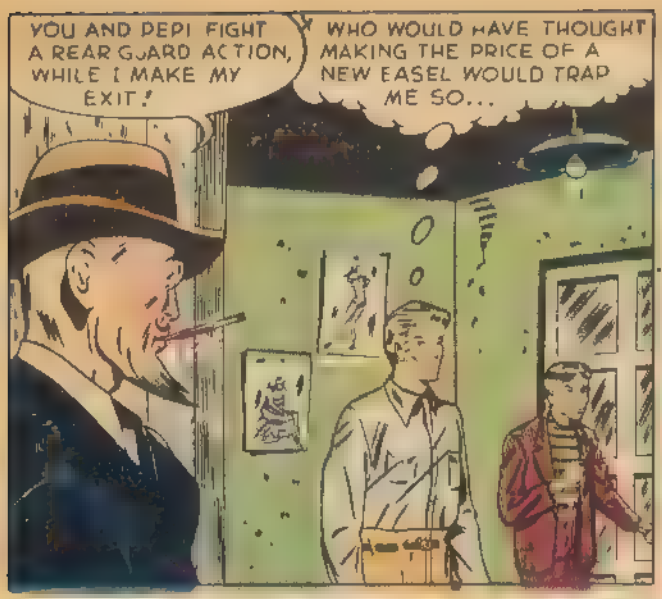


MR RISK, I'M SCARED--PLENTY SCARED! THE WAY THINGS LOOK, I'M SLATED TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN A FRENCH CLINK... THAT IS, IF YOU DON'T HELP ME!

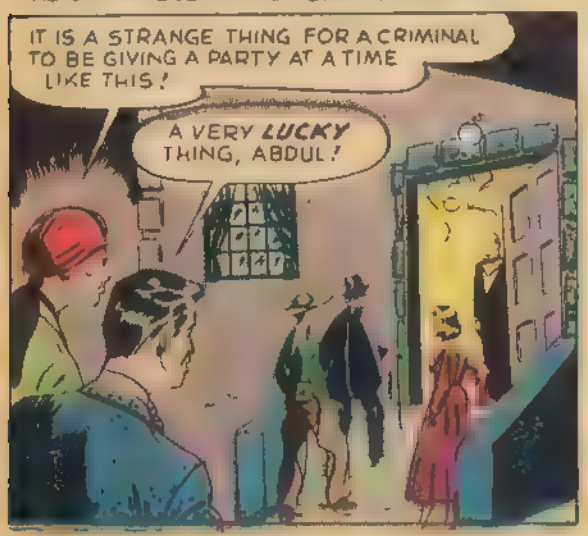
AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE, THREE THOUSAND MILES AWAY...
IT'S ABOUT A BLOKE NAMED ROCHE COUNT DE LA ROCHE - WHO'S THE BRAINS OF EVERY KIND OF RACKET IN PARIS! YOU'RE THE ONE GUY CAPABLE OF GETTING ME OUT OF HIS CLUTCHES!
BUT NANCY AND I-- NANCY BLAINE'S MY GIRL FRIEND - FIGURE YOU COULD GET ROCHE BEFORE THE GENDARMES GET ME... FOR MAKING PLATES TO PRINT COUNTERFEIT AMERICAN CURRENCY!
I GUESS I WAS PRETTY DUMB TO START COPYING A TEN SPOT IN THE FIRST PLACE...
OHH!
COUNT ROCHE... OHHH...
CLICK!
MASTER, A WOMAN SCREAMS!
AND THAT'S THE END OF JOHNNY'S PHONE CALL- MAYBE OF JOHNNY HIMSELF!
DON'T TRY TO JUMP ME, JOHNNY! I AM QUITE SERIOUS ABOUT KILLING MADEMOISELLE BLAINE IF YOU DO!
WELL, COUNT, WHERE TO FROM HERE... MY FINAL RESTING PLACE IN A SECLUDED PARIS SEWER?
NO, JOHNNY! YOU ARE MUCH TOO VALUABLE TO KILL! I STILL NEED YOUR TALENT AS AN ENGRAVER!
WITH A HOSTAGE TO ASSURE YOUR LOYALTY, I SHALL PERMIT YOU ABSOLUTE FREEDOM!
2

NANCY--A HOSTAGE!
SHE DIES INSTANTLY, JOHNNY, IF YOU TRY TO HELP EITHER RISK, OR THE PARIS POLICE AGAINST ME!
SOME TIME LATER, IN A PLANE THAT CIRCLES PARIS FOR THE LANDING AT LE BOURGET AIRPORT...
WHY, MASTER, DO WE NOT HAVE THIS COUNT ROCHE ARRESTED?
HE HAS BEEN ARRESTED A NUMBER OF TIMES ACCORDING TO REPORTS... AND ALWAYS RELEASED FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE! THAT'S OUR TROUBLE NOW!
OUR JOB, ABDUL, IS TO GET THE EVIDENCE AND TO SAVE JOHNNY WINGATE IF HE'S STILL ALIVE! THE TWO OF US AGAINST ROCHE IN THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF PARIS... QUITE AN ASSIGNMENT!
A SHORT TIME LATER, IN THE LATIN QUARTER...
HERE IT IS, ABDUL-- THE STUDIO BUILDING WHERE NANCY AND JOHNNY LIVED, ACCORDING TO THEIR REGISTRATION WITH THE VISA AUTHORITIES!
RUE BOIS
THEY WON'T BE HERE, OF COURSE--AT LEAST, NOT ALIVE! BUT WE MAY BE ABLE TO PICK UP SOME KIND OF LEAD ON ROCHE'S COUNTERFEIT OPERATIONS!
RISK AND ABDUL SEARCHED JOHNNY'S STUDIO...
LOOKS AS IF ROCHE RANSACKED BOTH JOHNNY'S AND NANCY'S STUDIOS AHEAD OF US! THE ONLY INTERESTING THING I'VE FOUND IS THIS MENU!
AN ORDINARY ENOUGH MENU, ABDUL.. EXCEPT THAT IT'S DATED YESTERDAY, AND THE ADDRESS IS UNDERLINED SEVERAL TIMES- MUST BE A REASON FOR T!
MENU
Cafe Cyache
17 RUE RUDOLPH
JUNE 7
3


17 RUE RUDOLPH IS IN MONTMARTRE, ONE OF THE TOUGHEST SECTIONS.. UH ?
WATCH OUT, MASTER!
SWISH
THAT KNIFE CAME CLOSE ENOUGH TO SHAVE ME!
AFTER HIM, MASTER!
WE'VE GOT HIM NOW! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE TO RUN!
WAIT, ABDUL... HE'S PLAYING THE OLD GAME OF POSSUM!
TO LEAD US INTO A TRAP, PERHAPS, MASTER?
MORE LIKELY TO LEAD US AWAY FROM THE CAFE APACHE! ABDUL, WE'RE BOUND FOR 17 RUE RUDOLPH!
THE PLAN DIDN'T WORK!
TEN MINUTES LATER...
LOOK! THE KNIFE-THROWER AGAIN!
BUT HE'S HERE AHEAD OF US, WHICH MEANS WE CAN EXPECT TROUBLE!
QUICK, MONSIEUR LE COUNT--RISK COMES UP THE FRONT STAIRS!
DON'T FORGET, JOHNNY-- IF I DON'T GET AWAY FROM HERE WITH THESE PLATES, MADEMOISELLE BLAINE STOPS A BULLET!


YOU AND PEPI FIGHT A REAR GUARD ACTION, WHILE I MAKE MY EXIT!
WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT MAKING THE PRICE OF A NEW EASEL WOULD TRAP ME SO...

LATER, ON THE FASHIONABLE RUE BONAPARTE, AS DARKNESS STEALS OVER THE CITY.

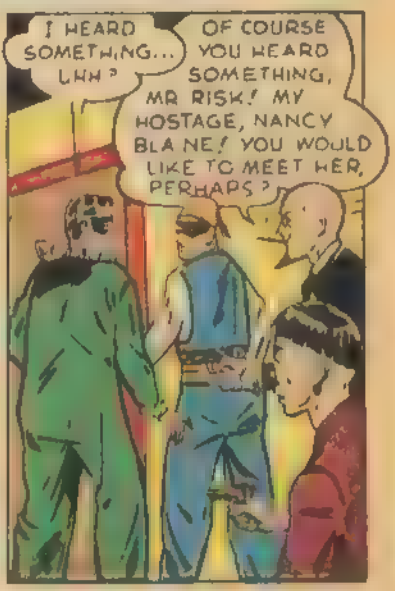


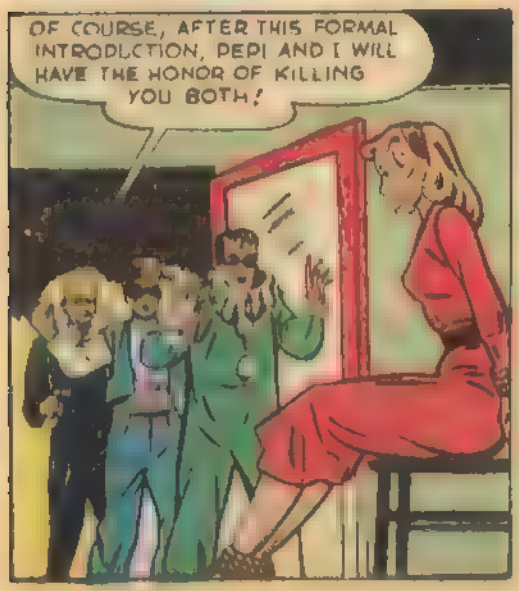
MASTER, MY CONSCIENCE SHOULD BOTHER ME FOR THIS, BUT...
WE NEED THEIR INVITATIONS AND COSTUMES, ABDUL.. AND I DON'T THINK THEY ARE HONEST CITIZENS OF PAR S TO BEGIN WITH!
OOOFF
AARGH!

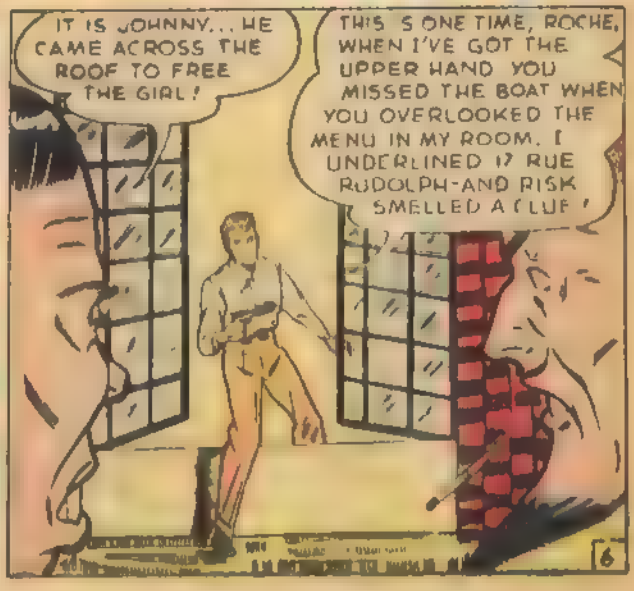
FROM WHAT I KNOW OF THE COUNT, HE'S NOT THE SORT WHO THROWS A PARTY JUST TO BE SOCIAB..E!

NO TELLING WHAT KIND OF CHARACTERS ARE BEHIND THESE MASKS!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...
WE'LL START AT THE TOP OF THE HOUSE AND WORK DOWN!
JMPHH... OHHH!

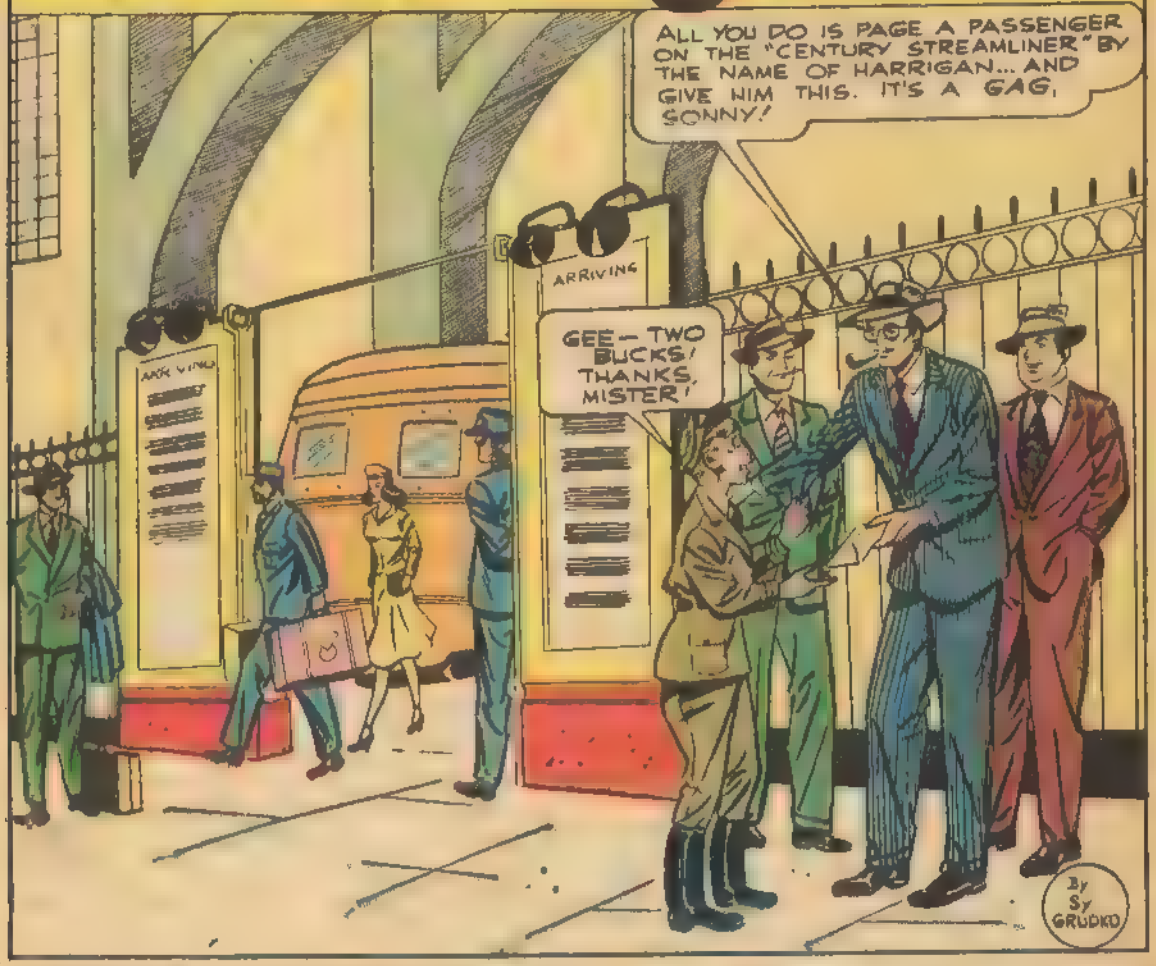

I HEARD SOMETHING... UHH?
OF COURSE YOU HEARD SOMETHING, MR RISK! MY HOSTAGE, NANCY BLA NE! YOU WOULD LIKE TO MEET HER, PERHAPS?


OF COURSE, AFTER THIS FORMAL INTRODUCTION, PEPI AND I WILL HAVE THE HONOR OF KILLING YOU BOTH!

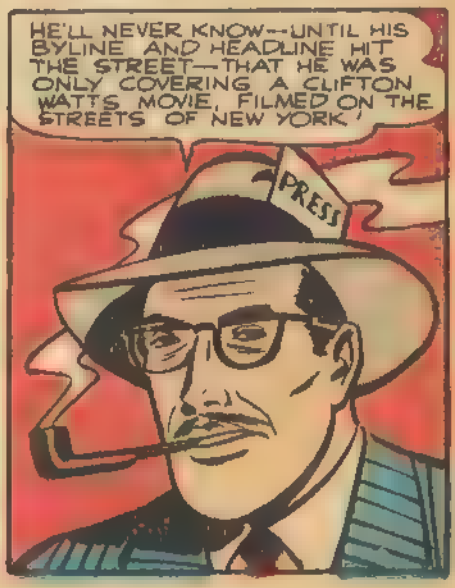

IT IS JOHNNY... HE CAME ACROSS THE ROOF TO FREE THE GIRL!
THIS S ONE TIME, ROCHE, WHEN I'VE GOT THE UPPER HAND YOU MISSED THE BOAT WHEN YOU OVERLOOKED THE MENU IN MY ROOM. I UNDERLINED 17 RUE RUDOLPH-AND RISK SMELLED A CLUE!

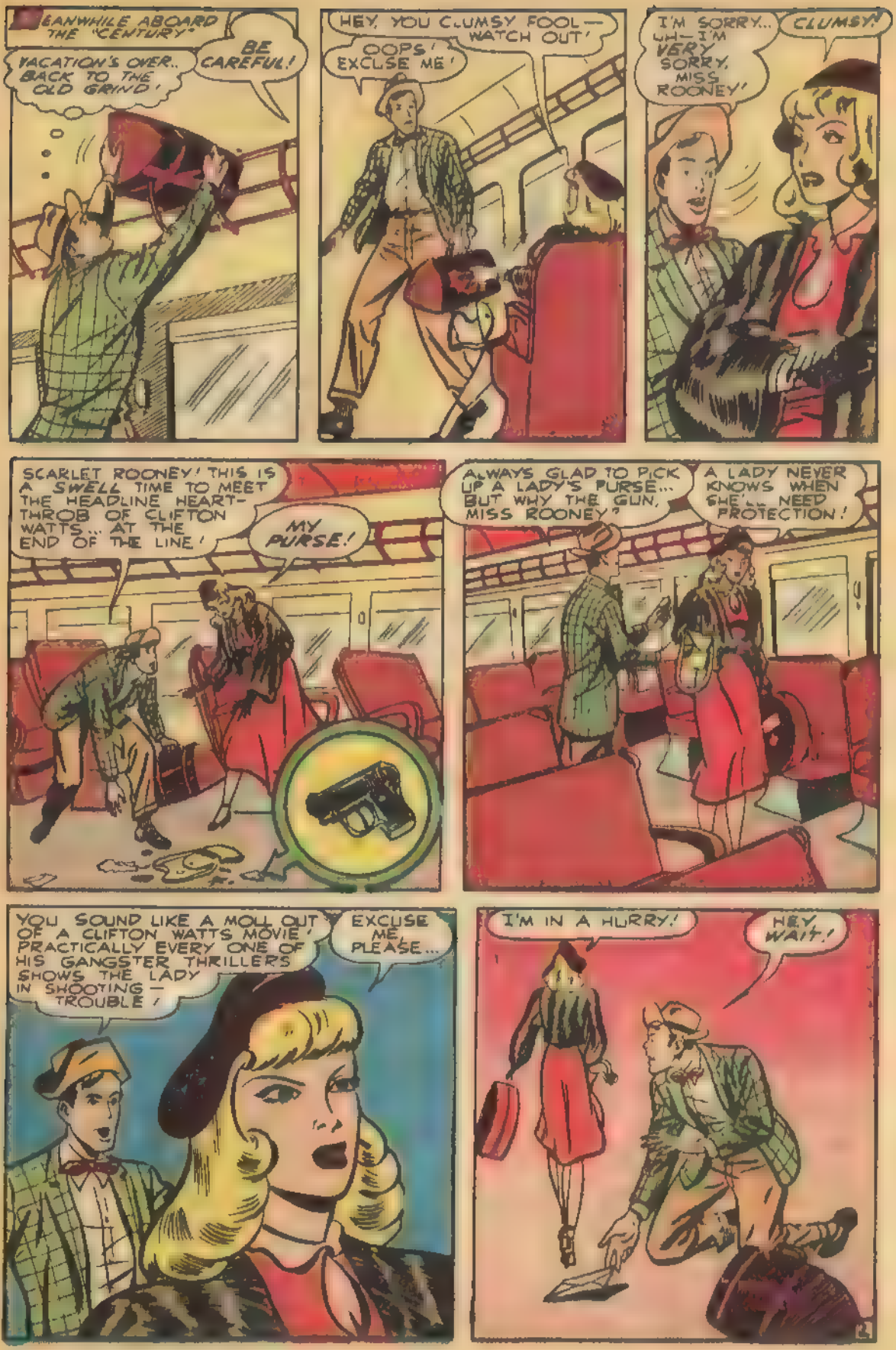
THAT'S FOR YOU, PEPI
Yiii
I KEEP MY PROMISE, JOHNNY--
THE GIRL PAYS WITH HER LIFE!
NO SHE DOESN'T... UHH!
BLAM
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, RISK... I'VE GOT THE WINDOW COVERED!
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT, ROCHE!
HOW'S YOUR BALANCE, ROCHE?
Yiiii
AND THAT'S THE END OF ROCHE!
BUT NOT THE END OF HIS ORGANIZATION, MR. RISK! DOWNSTAIRS ARE THE BLACK MARKETEERS ROCHE WAS GOING TO USE TO DISTRIBUTE THE BOGUS AMERICAN MONEY I PRINTED! HE PLANNED TO FLOOD EUROPE WITH IT!
I DON'T THINK THEY'LL GO FAR, JOHNNY..
A CORDON OF GENDARMES!
A PRECAUTION I TOOK BEFORE ABDUL AND I ENTERED THE HOUSE! FROM WHAT I LEARNED OVER THE PHONE, INSPECTOR RODIN OF THE PARIS POLICE, KNEW ROCHE TOO WELL TO BE HARD ON ANYBODY WHO FELL INTO HIS CLUTCHES, AS YOU DID I THINK YOU'VE LEARNED ENOUGH ABOUT ART IN PARIS BETTER PRACTICE IT IN AMERICA FROM NOW ON- LEGALLY, THAT IS!
7

Harrigan


ALL YOU DO IS PAGE A PASSENGER ON THE "CENTURY STREAMLINER" BY THE NAME OF HARRIGAN... AND GIVE HIM THIS. IT'S A GAG, SONNY!
ARRIVING
GEE—TWO BUCKS! THANKS, MISTER!
By Sy GRUDKO

PARAGON PICTURES STARTS SHOOTING ON LOCATION AT 2 30 SHARP! HARRIGAN OUGHT TO MAKE IT JUST IN TIME!
POOR HARRIGAN! A PHONY ASSIGNMENT TO COVER A PHONY GANGSTER KILLING!


HE'LL NEVER KNOW—UNTIL HIS BYLINE AND HEADLINE HIT THE STREET—THAT HE WAS ONLY COVERING A CLIFTON WATTS MOVIE, FILMED ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK!
PRESS


MEANWHILE ABOARD THE 'CENTURY'
VACATION'S OVER.. BACK TO THE OLD GRIND!
BE CAREFUL!
HEY, YOU CLUMSY FOOL— WATCH OUT!
OOPS! EXCUSE ME!
I'M SORRY... UH— I'M VERY SORRY, MISS ROONEY!
CLUMSY!
SCARLET ROONEY! THIS IS A SWELL TIME TO MEET THE HEADLINE HEART-THROB OF CLIFTON WATTS... AT THE END OF THE LINE!
MY PURSE!
ALWAYS GLAD TO PICK UP A LADY'S PURSE... BUT WHY THE GUN, MISS ROONEY?
A LADY NEVER KNOWS WHEN SHE'LL NEED PROTECTION!
YOU SOUND LIKE A MOLL OUT OF A CLIFTON WATTS MOVIE! PRACTICALLY EVERY ONE OF HIS GANGSTER THRILLERS SHOWS THE LADY IN SHOOTING— TROUBLE!
EXCUSE ME, PLEASE...
I'M IN A HURRY!
HEY, WAIT!

OH, WELL! MAYBE SHE D'ON'T WANT THE LETTER ANYWAY!
IF IT ISN'T HARRIGAN, THE BOY-WONDER OF REPORTING!
HARRIGAN HIMSELF! GET A LOOK AT THE RETURNING CELEBRITY, JOE!
LAY OFF, YOU BLOKES... HERE, BOY!
PAGING HURRY-UP HARRIGAN!
WOW! THIS SOUNDS LIKE A HOT ASSIGNMENT!
ANYTHING WE OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT, HARRIGAN?
I'LL SEE YOU CHARACTERS, LATER!
ANYBODY'D THINK HE HAD WIND OF A BIG STORY!
MAYBE EVEN A SCOOP!
MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF TOWN...
IT WAS KINDA HARD TO CONTRACT FRANKIE CASTELLI AND THE BOYS FOR THE MASSACRE SCENE... UNTIL I TOLD THEM THEY'D STAR IN A CLIFTON WATTS PICTURE!
I THOUGHT THAT WOULD DO IT, COOKIE!
BECAUSE OF HIS FOOLISH VANITY, IN EXACTLY TEN MINUTES CASTELLI FACES THE MACHINE-GUN OF HIS MOST TRUSTED LIEUTENANT—COOKIE MARTIN!
AND BULLETS, CLIFF—REAL BULLETS!
I RIDE BY IN THE CAR WIT' JIMMY DRIVING—I OPEN UP—EVERY ONE OF CASTELLI'S GANG STOPS LEAD!
13

ALL OF A SUDDEN—NO MORE CASTELLI—AND YOU, CLIFF, ARE THE NEW BOSS OF THE CITY'S RACKETS!
I'VE DONE IT A TEDIOUS NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE CINEMA! PERHAPS IN REAL LIFE IT WILL BE MORE INTERESTING!
HOW ABOUT THE DAME, CLIFF? SHE KNOWS THE PITCH... SHE MIGHT TRY BLACK-MAIL!
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF MISS SCARLET ROONEY... IF AND WHEN SHE TRIES TO SHAKE ME DOWN!
MEANWHILE...
WE'RE ALMOST THERE, BUDDY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW RELIABLE THE CHIEF'S TIP ON THIS STORY IS, BUT IF SOMEONE REALLY LIQUIDATES CASTELLI AND HIS MOB...
MIGOSH!
HACK 69!?
RAT-A-TAT-TAT!
GET DOWN... AHHHH...
OHHH!
SCREECH!
A MASSACRE! CASTELLI AND HIS GANG!
SHORT TIME LATER...
TERRIBLE! MY LEADING MAN HIRES AUTHENTIC GANGSTERS FOR A MOVIE! THEY EVEN GET AUTHENTICALLY BUMPED OFF, BUT MY CAMERAS AREN'T READY!
A MOVIE? IT WAS ONLY SUPPOSED TO BE A MOVIE?
THEN, AS SOON AS HARRIGAN CAN REACH A PHONE...
YOU DIDN'T SEND ME ON THIS ASSIGNMENT, CHIEF? OKAY... SWELL! HERE'S THE LEAD: OPPOSITION REPORTERS' GAS TODAY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HARRIGAN OF "THE BLADE" BEING ON THE SPOT...
41

AND THAT EVENING...
I THOUGHT YOU CHARACTERS DIDN'T READ ANYTHING BUT THE DISPATCH? SEE ANYTHING INTERESTING IN MY PAPER?
YOU'RE THE LUCKIEST GUY ON TWO FEET!
FINALLY! A QUIET MINUTE TO SNOOP INTO THIS LETTER SCARLET DROPPED ON THE TRAIN!
NOBODY KNOWS YET WHO PLANNED THE MASSACRE... AND WHY— HARRIGAN HASN'T GOT THE WHOLE STORY!
A THREATENING LETTER TO SCARLET ROONEY FROM COOKIE MARTIN!
Stay out of town right girl. Cookie Martin
MARTIN—THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF FRANKIE CASTELLI'S MOB! GOLLY, I WONDER IF SCARLET ROONEY KNOWS HOW MUCH DANGER SHE'S REALLY IN!
LOOK AT HARRIGAN! HE'S GOT A LEAD MAYBE... LET'S TAG AFTER HIM!
I'VE GOT TO FIND HER— TALK TO HER! CLIFTON WATTS OUGHT TO KNOW WHERE SHE'S STAYING!
MOB SLAYING
SHORTLY, IN THE LOBBY OF CLIFTON WATTS' APARTMENT HOTEL...
IF WATTS ISN'T ANSWERING HIS PHONE, HE'S PROBABLY NOT TALKING TO REPORTERS, EITHER!
COOKIE MARTIN— THAT'S WHO IS CALLING, BUDDY!
TELEPHONE
YES, SIR! MR. WATTS EXPECTS YOU. SUITE 4F!
CLIFTON WATTS EXPECTS COOKIE MARTIN?!
5

THE ANSWER TO THAT COMBINATION OF TALENT IS WORTH RUNNING UP FOUR FLIGHTS OF STAIRS TO GET!

HELLO, COOKIE! COME ON IN!

HELLO, BOSS... I GOT YOUR CALL!

BOSS! SO WATTS IS NOW MARTIN'S BOSS!

AND SCARLET SOMEHOW FITS INTO THE PICTURE! THIS IS HEADLINE NEWS, IF I CAN ONLY FIND OUT HOW THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER.

$100,000! THAT IS QUITE A BIT OF MONEY!

BUT YOU'LL NEVER COLLECT, SCARLET, FOR KNOWING THAT THIS AFTERNOON'S MASSACRE WAS MY PLAN ... BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO FALL OFF THE ROOF!

UHHH?

OHHH!

IT LOOKS LIKE TWO PEOPLE ARE GONNA TAKE THE ELEVATOR UP TO THE ROOF FOR AN EXPRESS TRIP DOWN!

MINUTE LATER...

YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS, WATTS. YOU'RE MAD!

REALLY?

SUDDENLY, THE ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN, AND...

HEY, LOOK! THEY'VE GOT A GUN ON HARRIGAN AND THE DAME!

WHAT'S THE IDEA, YOU GUYS?

BACK, EVERYBODY... BACK INTO THE CAGE!
FIRST GUY THAT EVEN BREATHES GETS A SLUG!
CAN'T STAND CROWDED ELEVATORS, FOLKS! I'LL TAKE THE STAIRWAY!
BAM!
SHOOT HIM, MARTIN... THE DOOR IS CLOSING!
MISSED ME!
BAM!
IF I PRY OPEN THE SHAFT DOOR, THE ELEVATOR STOPS AUTOMATICALLY. BETWEEN FLOORS, I HOPE!
HEY, IT'S STOPPING!
WE'RE TRAPPED!
CAUGHT BETWEEN FLOORS WITH TWO GUNMEN... AND HARRIGAN KNOWS I'VE GOT A WEAK HEART!
NOW I'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME TO PHONE THE COPS... AND THE CITY EDITOR!
SHORTLY...
GET MOVING, MARTIN! YOU, TOO, MISTER WATTS!
MAYBE IT ISN'T $100,000, SCARLET, BUT THE BOSS SAID HE'D PAY YOU $5,000 FOR EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO YOUR STORY ABOUT CLIFTON WATTS' PLOT TO TAKE OVER THE CITY'S RACKETS!
HEY! WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO FOR NEWS?
MAYBE THE REAL HERO OF THE STORY, HURRY-UP HARRIGAN, WILL GRANT YOU TWERPS AN INTERVIEW... AT SOME LATER DATE! SO LONG, PALS!
THE END